



piano, composition, voice

Biography

Born and raised in Bombay, a mega-metropolis on the west coast of India, Ramona Borthwick was exposed to music at an early age. Encouraged by her father, a well known musician and film composer, she began piano studies at age five, soon followed by studies in Western classical music. She was ranked first in Asia at the Licentiate level examinations in piano performance at the Trinity College of Music and the Royal Schools of Music, London. Soon after she became a sought after teacher by students and educational institutions, was actively involved in training choral ensembles and also did studio session work for the music industry.

In the 1980's she began performing with local jazz ensembles, later collaborating with husband Noel Borthwick on their 1991 debut album '**Sound Matters**', one of the first modern jazz recordings from India.

A move to Canada in the early 90's and later Boston, allowed her to widen her artistic depth and growth as a musician, composer and teacher. "*A New Leaf*" her debut CD released in 2006, featured a palette of several of her compositions that were written over this transitional period in her life and received glowing reviews from critics and the international press.

JazzImprov Magazine says of '*A New Leaf*': "*a musical journey of such extreme depth*", while **JazzReview** commented "*Borthwick displays an amazing talent for composition... her fellow musicians bring the music to a level that is rarely shown on a debut release.*"



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Billboard Magazine wrote: "Ramona Borthwick has made a major statement with this superb initial release."

Her latest project, released in November 2009 and her second CD release as a leader, showcases her evolution as an artist and composer. "One Of Us" is a celebration of planet Earth, reflecting on the urgency for us to act as protectors of its bounties. The ten original compositions written specifically



for this project, feature Borthwick's distinctive writing, playing and vocal styling, as well as great performances from trumpet/flugelhorn player Ingrid Jensen, guitarist Noel Borthwick, bassist Johannes Weidenmueller and drummer Adam Cruz. Even more so than her previous release, Borthwick's compositions are a highlight, yielding deeply harmonic music that stimulates vibrant and spirited playing from the quintet.

The album featured in **DownBeat Magazine's 'HotBox'**, where critics John McDonough wrote "Borthwick, who authored all the pieces in this self-produced and self-released CD, walks both sides of the street, playing excellent, if not quite distinctive, straightahead piano throughout, while adding her shimmering, wordless soprano lines to selected

ensembles along the way... For a work intended to be personal and perhaps introspective, the music is unusually alive, frisky and free from brooding pensiveness" while Paul deBarros mused "I like the warm spiritual vibe, especially Borthwick's wordless vocals, a la Flora Purim." **All About Jazz** says "Borthwick has a lyrical, uncluttered approach to the piano and her undoubted virtuosity never overshadows the melodicism inherent in her compositions... 'One Of Us' is a delightful reminder from Ramona Borthwick and her quintet that jazz this good never goes out of style."

A gifted composer, Borthwick's music conveys a narrative quality, spiritual depth, infectious energy and intuitive flow drawing influences from contemporary post-bop, ECM jazz, classical music and her legacy from India.

Borthwick currently resides in Boston, MA, where she continues to write and perform. She is also actively involved with music education, conducting workshops and lessons from her studio. A graduate in Economics, she holds degrees in classical piano performance from the Trinity College and Royals Schools of Music, London, UK. A talented graphic artist and web designer, her company Leitmotif specializes in graphic design & web development, and is well known for its work helping musicians and artists establish their web identity since the mid 90's and the early years of the web.

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"Borthwick, who authored all the pieces in this self-produced and self-released CD, walks both sides of the street, playing excellent, if not quite distinctive, straightahead piano throughout, while adding her shimmering, wordless soprano lines to selected ensembles along the way. She does this sparingly, sometimes subtly, and frequently hauntingly, never scattng or soloing but instead embedding and camouflaging herself deep into meticulously orchestrated unison lines in which her voice seems to float on piano, guitar and horn... For a work intended to be personal and perhaps introspective, the music is unusually alive, frisky and free from brooding pensiveness."

–John McDonough, HotBox Review – DOWNBEAT MAGAZINE, May 2010

"I like the warm spiritual vibe, especially Borthwick's wordless vocals, a la Flora Purim."

–Paul de Barros, HotBox Review – DOWNBEAT MAGAZINE, May 2010

"Ramona Borthwick proves that there is some depth among younger composers. Her bright work is agape at the immensity of all things. It appears that she looks at the world with childlike wonder, but is also privy to the true and deep nature of what she sees..." **–Raul daGama, AAJ**

"She's a fine player, displaying a style that has its roots in mainstream jazz. Her solos are often lyrical (listen to the beauty and strength of the title track) and she can really dig into her phrases. Her wordless vocals add yet another color to several of the tracks, mixing well with the guitar and trumpet or flugelhorn."

–Richard Kamin, Jazz Critic

"'One Of Us' is an album that you can listen to many times, always getting new and rewarding things from. I really hope that this effort becomes a must listen to, for jazz lovers around the world, such as myself, a pianist and composer from México City... My most sincere congratulations to Ramona and her team for making such a great album that I am sure, will endure the passing of time and become a collector's item in the jazz music world."

–Eugenio Toussaint, pianist, composer, Grammy nominee

"Borthwick has a lyrical, uncluttered approach to the piano and her undoubted virtuosity never overshadows the melodicism inherent in her compositions, which makes for very attractive solos—fluid and graceful... As impressive a pianist as Borthwick is, it is the strength and depth of the compositions which provides the lasting impression on this recording... One Of Us is a delightful reminder from Ramona Borthwick and her quintet that jazz this good never goes out of style."

–Ian Patterson, AAJ

"I strongly recommend to my fellow programmers that they check out the new disc from Ramona Borthwick 'One of Us'. I just added her to my Heavy Rotation. Her new disc was a real find for me, one of those 'surprises' that I didn't expect when I put it on in my car. Ramona is a keyboardist (piano, Rhodes, etc.) and composer. Her new disc is features her own contemporary, while progressive and substantive, compositions. The playing on here is stellar by all the band (Ramona has some chops!), notably Ingrid Jensen on trumpet. Ramona was born and raised in India, and I rather suspect that her upbringing there has had a big influence on her compositional style."

–Dr. Bradley Stone, Music Director KSJS, 5-time winner of "Jazz Programmer of the Year" at JazzWeek and Gavin; 2008 winner of the Duke DuBois Humanitarian Award

"Pianist-vocalist Ramona Borthwick has created a most engaging program of original quintet music on 'One Of Us'. Her compositions are complex and filled with surprises, and the performances, layered in rich textures and colors, are distinguished by the unique blending of her voice and Ingrid Jensen's trumpet.

—Bob Bernotas, Host, Just Jazz in 'New & Recommended CD's for Feb 2010'.

"On this new CD [A New Leaf], Ramona Borthwick's first, she displays a wonderful talent for composition and imagination in the various settings she chose for the pieces. Her playing is also creative and energetic. If this is her first installment, we can eagerly keep track of Ramona's coming chapters. Something nice is developing here."

—Kenny Werner, pianist, composer

"Ramona Borthwick has made a major statement with this superb initial release." —BILLBOARD.com

"Ramona Borthwick brings us a set of new music which pushes the boundaries both harmonically and rhythmically. The result is a fresh and creative disc that is not for the faint of heart. This is a great recording and I hope many get a chance to hear it and buy it!" —JAZZRADIO247.com

"'A New Leaf' is at turns melodious, swinging, emotional and cool... Brimming with energy and good vibes, the compositions are first rate. Shape shifting and extremely warm, 'A New Leaf' is a pleasure to listen to from beginning to end, and marks a terrific and important debut album from a fine composer and player. Most certainly, Ramona Borthwick is someone to watch." —Budd Koppman, AAJ

"Borthwick enters the jazz arena with a debut album that well crosses the developmental curve of compositional design. Providing extended chord structures through intelligent tempo and meter changes, Ramona spins original and creative melody lines that keep me engaged from the beginning to the end. She can play piano with emotion then revert to fire... The use of the voice as instrument on several tracks reveals pure genius. 'A New Leaf' provides a profile of the many styles in Ramona's repertoire, which seems to be without limit. The more I listen... the more I find in this treasure. This album which stands as one of the most significant releases of 2006... and to think... it's only the beginning!" —dr mike, radioioJAZZ

"Borthwick expresses herself very originally... These are musicians who deserve to be heard"

— Marshall Zucker, JAZZ IMPROV Magazine

As a leader:

ONE OF US | Ramona Borthwick

Leitmotif002 | 2009

Ramona Borthwick (piano, keyboard, voice)
Ingrid Jensen (trumpet)
Noel Borthwick (guitar)
Johannes Weidenmueller (bass)
Adam Cruz (drums)

A NEW LEAF | Ramona Borthwick

Leitmotif 003 | 2006

Ramona Borthwick (piano, voice)
Phil Grenadier (trumpet)
Noel Borthwick (guitar)
Fernando Huergo (bass)
Ziv Ravitz (drums)
Esperanza Spalding (voice on 2 & 9)

As a sidewoman:

SOUND MATTERS | Noel Borthwick Quartet

1991 | Magnasound/Sony-BMG